2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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TO WHOM DO THEY PRAY?

Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kugu?
Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kugu?
Kubasyuka! Kubasyuka!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abasungu, abasungu bikwiputa kugu?
Abasungu, abasungu bikwiputa kugu?
Kundalama! Kundalama!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abisilamu, abisilamu, bikwiputa kugu?
Abisilamu, abisilamu, bikwiputa kugu?
Kwa Mohamedi! Kwa Mohamedi!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abosigwa, abosigwa, bikwiputa kugu?
Abosigwa, abosigwa, bikwiputa kugu?
Kwa Jesu! Kwa Jesu!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Translation

The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
To the shades! To the shades!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
To money! To money!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom do they pray?
The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom to they pray?
To Mohammed! To Mohammed!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The baptised, the baptised to whom do they pray?
The baptised, the baptised to whom do they pray?
To Jesus! To Jesus!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

(Song of Nyakyusa Christians)

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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themselves. They form part of the education of every child, and of the admonitory stock-in-trade of all parents of growing boys and girls. A judge will use one to give point to his decision; a man pleading his case at the native court will illustrate his plea with an apt story. There are men and women whose large stock of tales, and skill in relating them, make them welcome in every gathering; but anyone, on occasion, will tell one. 538

The Tortoise and the Hedgehog

Once upon a time, when there was a famine, the Tortoise went to a far country to buy food. He found it in abundance, and made up a load; but on his way home he came upon a tree which had fallen across the path. So he laid down his load on the path, and followed the tree to see how big it was. When he was satisfied, he returned to pick up his load, but found that the Hedgehog had carried it off. Then the Tortoise said, "My friend Hedgehog, why have you taken off my load?" "Your load!" said the Hedgehog. "Why did you leave your load on the path? No, I have beaten you." The Tortoise went at once to the judge, who summoned the Hedgehog; and when he heard the facts he gave judgment for the latter. The judge said to the Tortoise, "You have lost the case. Why did you leave your load on the path? You are a fool." So the Tortoise went home, and the Hedgehog went off with the load of food. 539

After a long time hunters went out to hunt the

539 Hedgehog, who, to escape from them, backed into a hole in the ground. And in that hole who was there but the Tortoise, who when he saw the tail of the Hedgehog coming in, promptly bit it off close to the bone, and said, "Now I've got you!" The Hedgehog was terribly angry, and went off to the judge. The judge summoned the Tortoise, who said, "Why did he separate himself from his tail in that way? The rest of us are all of a piece." And the judge said, "You are a fool, Hedgehog. Why don't you go like other people? You have lost the case."

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CHAPTER II

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

IN Nyakyusa mythology the heroes were creators of crops and animals and were driven out from BuKinga by a jealous father (or elder brother) who sought to kill them; but he found, when they had gone, that they had taken the fertility of the country with them, so he sent offerings after them, and still such offerings are brought to their graves in sacrifice. One of the heroes, Kyala (2), created crops alone, and of him it is said that each time his father or elder brother tried to kill him he rose again; another, Lwembe or Mbasi (3 or 15?), created both crops and animals, brought cattle, fire, and iron to the Nyakyusa valley, and left many descendants who spread over the valley as chiefs, ruling a people who had not known chiefs.

The names and events mentioned vary somewhat from one area to another; in some versions there were three brothers, though the eldest, Nkekete (1), being buried in Kisi country, does not concern the Nyakyusa; in another version the brothers had a sister who was the mother of Kyungu (16), the hero of Ngonde; but the general pattern of heroic ancestors who were creators and discoverers, and who brought to the old inhabitants of the valley such good gifts as crops and stock, fire and iron, and the institution of chieftainship, remains the same. They all had miraculous power and are vaguely connected with volcanic disturbance, such as continued in the area until recent times (*vide infra*, p. 16).

Here is an account by Kikungubeja, one of the priests of BuKinga, whence the heroes came:

Nkekete (1) and Kyala (2) were brothers, Mwemusi [the first Kinga chief] killed them. Mwemusi's men tried first to kill them by cutting their throats, then by throwing them into a little lake, then by heating a great stone and throwing it on top of them. Each time Nkekete and his younger brother Kyala rose again. Then they left the country, the two of them, and the earth rumbled as they walked. Nkekete (1) went to Mbela to build; Kyala (2), the younger, to PaliKyala. Then the men of Mwemusi followed Nkekete with a cow to entreat him because he had taken all the food with him. Mwemusi was angry with him and his younger brother Kyala, because they made food and they were

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539 fierce warriors. They were first driven out, then later Lwembe (3) was driven out too. When Lwembe was a child, herding cattle with his fellows, he moulded cattle of clay and they became alive; so with lions and leopards, too; he also took up a handful of earth and it became beans or millet. His fellows told Mwemusi of this and he was astonished. Then Mwemusi sent men to watch; they went early in the morning and hid themselves and watched; they watched him making all these things. Then they wanted to kill him, but the forefather of Mwakalukwa [another Kinga chief] gave him two cows; he was a friend and said: 'Leave the country, they want to kill you, take these cows and eat them on the road.' Lwembe went away with Kissoule and Mwamaloba (Mwamalunguka) and two wives and all his animals.

These three, Nkekete (1), Kyala (2), and Lwembe (3), were driven out by Mwemusi, but Lwembe's younger brothers, the BaMwalukissa (4), were left. When Lwembe went away, Mwemusi's men followed him, wishing to kill him, but they feared his animals, and did not try.

Nkekete (1) set out to the Lake [Nyasa] and went into a stream; he is in the water now, in a stream with pools near the Lake, in Kisi country. Kyala (2) went and built among stones in a cave. When the [177] Europeans came they took rifles and shot at Kyala in the place where he had built, so he moved to a different place. Of old he was in a cave washed by the waters of the Lake, but after the Europeans came he moved to his present cave at the boundary between Kisselelo's and Kisi country. Kyala had fowls there; some saw them in the old days [782] and some did not. Nkekete is in a stream with pools in it; there (at Lumbila in Kisi country) men sacrifice a cow. Kyala's sheep are killed near his cave.

Neither Nkekete nor Kyala had any children, but Lwembe (3), who went off alive, begot many children. We speak with them. Nkekete and Kyala were killed, Lwembe was not. . . . All the Kinga chiefs when praying in the sacred groves say the names of their fathers [782] who have died, and also the names of Nkekete, Kyala, and Lwembe, [769] in that order . . . Lwembe was the youngest of the three brothers . . . Nkekete and Kyala only made crops—millet and beans. We ask for fertility of the soil (*imbolo*), and sunshine, and rain from them, but not animals. From Lwembe we ask for milk, and fertility of men and cattle, and snakes, and goats, and sheep, and all crops. Lwembe has everything. We ask for sunshine and rain from Lwembe as well.

When Lwembe went down into Selya he found the hill people (*BaMwemba*) and the people of the plain (Mwakyembe's men)[1] already there. They feared him because he had all things, and they still fear him. He was greater than Nkekete. They cut Nkekete's throat, but they couldn't kill Lwembe. He made the small lakes—all of them. He

[1] In other versions Mwakyembe is a descendant of Lwembe.

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went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaleli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Masoko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals.

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *ifingila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend.

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifingila*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifingila*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulwembe*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifingila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kissoule and Kimonile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived is 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *ifingila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60).

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized:

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point:

Mbasi (Lwembe 15?) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

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539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had perforations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

[778] [782]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

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In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

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539 372 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food uncooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mayikuyi i Africa/ Kshiv wieder Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

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Then the chiefs took it from him and spread it through the Kinga country . . . and to the Mahasi, the Ndali, the Nyakyusa. . . . It was taken to BuNyakyusa before Lwembe went, when he was a child, before the killing of Nkekete and Kyala.

In the version told by Mwandisi (107), the old blind chief of MuNgonde, the various events of the cycle are rather differently combined; there were three brothers in BuKinga, Lyambilo (12) or Ngutike, Kyala, and Mbasi, and a sister, Kyumba. Lyambilo discovered how to make fire with a fire drill. Kyala was clever at making food—maize and millet—and Mbasi was clever at making animals—cattle, lions, elephants.

Then Lyambilo, the eldest, was angry that his younger brothers should be so clever; he was jealous. First he made war on Kyala, he wounded him once, but he did not die; then he wounded him again, but still he didn't die; then the third time Lyambilo put a stone in the fire and made it hot and threw it at Kyala, and he died, and was thrown into the Lake. But as soon as he died there was a great famine, no rain fell and no food grew. So they had to pray to Kyala to give them rain, and they killed a cow to sacrifice to Kyala. And as soon as they had done this much food grew.

Still Lyambilo was jealous of Mbasi because he could make animals. But when he went to kill him he found so many animals with him, roaring lions, and elephants, that he was afraid and he ran away. And he brought some hoes to Mbasi to say he was sorry for having tried to kill him. Then Mbasi moved from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa hills (Mwamba). . . . Lyambilo stayed in BuKinga. . . . Mbasi came down to the plain on a visit and went back to the hills, but his sister Kyumba stayed down here and married a man and bore a son. Before she came there was no fire here, she brought fire, and so they called her son Kyungu in honour of his mother because she brought fire.

When Mbasi was at Masukulu (in the hills) he made one cow, but it soon died; then he moved to Mbambo and made another cow and this soon died; then he went to Lubaga (which is still called Mbasi) and there he made one cow again which bore many many calves, and he divided his cattle among his sons. . . . Mbasi was Lwembe.

In Ngonde tradition the first Kyungu (16) was a man, descendant of Ngulube the Kinga chief, and he travelled with three brothers and a sister westwards, passing south of Rungwe volcano, where he and his immediate successor were buried, one of them on Kieyo mountain. Their descendants went on to the 'country of the Bisa', then returned eastward to Mbande, the sacred hill which the Kyungu took from a Fipa hunter, Simbobwe. Like Lwembe,

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and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1]

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and *who have witchcraft in their* bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

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looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens.

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifika*).

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga.

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*unsololi* or *unkunguluka*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekesya umfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses.

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kissoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Jo kyala: ipela sota*). Her Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks

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war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured:

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubusinya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . .

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu —the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the

[1] These names are obscure.

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indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it.

QUESTION: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not?

KASITILE: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

QUESTION: But your sickness?

KASITILE: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!'

QUESTION: What did he mean by that?

KASITILE: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him.

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

QUESTION: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

KASITILE: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa tukwiputa namesi ko kusyosya ilisyu loysa, lenga ndikwiputa namesi po lisyele limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala gwesa, tata gwesa, abasyuka bosa.*)

QUESTION:

KASITILE: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,